

**WORK SESSION
OCTOBER 15-16, 2025**

TAB	DESCRIPTION	ACTION
1	IRSA – DEMONSTRATING THE VALUE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION	Information Item

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SUBJECT

Work Session: Demonstrating the Value of Postsecondary Education

REFERENCE

APPLICABLE STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

Not applicable

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

Postsecondary attainment is more important than ever before, and yet higher education institutions are also facing greater skepticism. According to a recent report from the Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce, "the number of college-educated retirees retiring "far outpaces the number of young people entering the workforce with similar levels of education." The report predicts that the United States will need an additional 5.25 million workers with college credentials.

At the same time, a recent Gallup poll indicates that the percentage of Americans' confidence in higher education has declined. The Board, together with the institutions, can address this challenge through strategic initiatives designed to bolster economic mobility and civic engagement at all institutions.

In Idaho, the urgency is particularly clear. Employers, community leaders, and citizens alike emphasize the importance of graduates who are prepared to engage productively in civic life, bringing skills in civil discourse, problem solving, and informed decision-making to their workplaces and communities. Idaho's strong tradition of civic participation, from high rates of volunteerism to high voting turnouts, underscores the opportunity to reinforce these habits of democracy in higher education. By fostering both career readiness and civic readiness, the Board and institutions can build public trust, strengthen Idaho's workforce, and ensure that graduates contribute meaningfully to the state's economic and democratic vitality.

IMPACT

This presentation and guided discussion will enable Board members to learn more about the national conversation and context around these issues. While the broader context is an important part of this conversation, the Board's leadership is key in establishing guidance for institutions to develop institution-wide approaches so that students gain civic knowledge and experience civil dialogue. By fostering both career readiness and civic readiness, the Board and institutions can build public trust, strengthen Idaho's workforce, and ensure that graduates contribute meaningfully to the state's economic and democratic vitality.

ATTACHMENTS

None

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STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Idaho's public postsecondary institutions are well positioned to respond to this discussion with both experience and commitment. They bring existing strengths in workforce preparation and civic engagement and can align their efforts with the Board's leadership in addressing public confidence. Board staff will work with institutions to coordinate their efforts and provide updates as appropriate.

BOARD ACTION

This item is for informational purposes.